From: S.K.Panigrahi, Date: 05/11/2008
Shillong

To:
The Continental Counsellor Mr. Praveen Mallik

SUB: POLICE INVESTIGATION OF BAHA'IS IN THE AFTERMATH OF SERIAL BOMB BLASTS ACROSS ASSAM.

Dear friends,

By now, you may have heard about the tragic incidents in several towns in Assam where a series of bombs blasts on (Oct-30, 2008) extinguished at least eighty odd lives, while injuring about three hundred innocent souls. Baha'is of Assam and of the NE Region had been beseeching for divine succour and solace for the dead and injured through SMS campaigns. (At least two such messages had been received by friends in Meghalaya).

A few days later, on 3rd Nov. ABM-Miss Nilakshi was contacted by policemen for some questioning, about one of our believers Mr. Kensu Narzary who belongs to BARAMA Village near Nalbari town—a non-priority cluster. In fact, while tracking the call details of Mr. Narzary's cell phone, police had got Miss Nilakkshi's number that had been contacted by Mr. Narzary a number of times, in the recent past.

It is proper to mention here the reasons and circumstances, under which, Mr. Narzary- a Book-7 Ruhi graduate, had come under the scanner of the security forces. As per the informal versions of the investigating agencies, one particular motor-bike (among many a vehicle) had been completely gutted at Panbazar blast site, in Guwahati city. After investigation it was learnt that the bike belonged to a gentleman (an acquaintance of Mr. Kenso) who claimed and showed some papers that he had indeed sold the bike to Kenso, after which a search for him began, but in vain. As the police was confirmed about Mr. Kenso not among the dead for reasons best known to them, therefore, this search turned into a man-hunt and then his mobile number-tracking had revealed many of his calls to other Bahá'í friends in the city that included several calls to Miss Nilakshi.

As Miss Nilakshi was called to police station for questioning, ABM-Mrs. Sabika Gogoi offered to accompany Miss Nilakshi and both of them were interrogated by police, mainly about Kenso and his details,

as mentioned above. Both the Board Members complied with the interrogation by stating that details regarding Kenso can be provided in Bahá'í House. All the details as were highlighted in his declaration card, including Kenso's photographs that had figured in many of his Bahá'í activities such as Institute Campaigns, were provided; after which, the police picked up Mr. Prafulla Sharma (caretaker of Bahá'í House at Guwahati) and released both ladies on the way to Dispur P.S.. Police came back at 10 p.m. to Bahá'í House to pick up Mr. Kamal Sharma, SSO of RBC. He was also brought to Dispur PS, where Mr. Prafulla was already there and was being interrogated, mainly to gather information regarding Kenso.
It was at around midnight of 3rd Nov. Mr. Vipin Nanda-RBC member gave me the first information about what had happened during the day and in the night,. through a SMS and then a short and frantic phone call. Only thing that I could do was to utter some words of consolation and reassurance about divine assistance, forward that SMS to Miss Nazneene, Mrs. Sorabjee and Counsellor Mr. Praveen and said Tablet of Ahmed a number of times. Mr. Nanda and myself, of course had discussed about informing Mr. C.K.Das and Mr. M.K.Dewan. Both these friends had rightfully and wisely advised for the investigating team to continue with their routine business and that they would offer their assistance in the morning. As promised by them Mr. Dewan accompanied by Mr. Nanda and with the assistance of Mr. C.K.Das had reached the PS very early in the morning. It was certain that friends were treated very well under the circumstances, had no case charged against them and were only being questioned to one end—to provide thorough information regarding Mr. Kenso.

As far as Mr. kamal and Mr. Prafulla's information sharing on Kenso goes, they had said that Kenso is a very gentle, well-behaved, unity-loving, peaceful and spiritual being. This was also the versions of Mrs. Gogoi and Miss Nilakshi. Kenso's different services to the Faith were also highlighted. In fact, the Magistrate and the police who had been recording statement of friends on Kenso had received an elaborate teaching on the Faith, its various socio-spiritual principles, core activities, administrative organs and on the Bahá'í House of Worship at Delhi. Many Officers had also spoken very highly of the beautiful Lotus Temple. During the course of our two friends being interrogated, they had been taken to two police stations and to the DC court, where, after Mr. Kamal's testimonies, both were released finally, at about 9 p.m. on the 4th Nov. almost 32 hrs. after they had been taken into police custody.

All other friends, Mr. Nanda, Mr. Dewan and both lady Board Members were following our two friends whole through out the day, right from early morning. They all went home after these two friends

got released, after undertaking that they would keep the investigating agencies informed about Kenso as and when he establishes any contact with our Bahá'í community. However, the ordeal was repeated the next day, when Mr. Prafulla, whose testimonies had not been taken, was summoned to thana for second time at around 11 a.m. As the process was getting repeated for second time Mr. Nanda and our ABMs underwent the same kind of tests, all over again, until the final reprieve at around 7 p.m. on the 5th Nov.

While all these friends were engaged in this gruesome and grueling testing times, other ABMs—Mr. Sanjib, Mr. Dilip Das and Chhabi Nayak and RBC member-Mr. Goutam; being coordinated over phone, by this humble servant, were finalizing the list of participants for Regional Conference at Kolkata. Till date, About 60 friends from Assam, A.P. and Meghalaya have confirmed about their participation with confirmed tickets booked already by dear Mr. Chhabi Nayak, while about additional 20 friends expected to confirm by tomorrow evening. Had this unforeseen test not cropped up before us suddenly, we would have been in a position to send our final list to the NSA, by now.

Let me state that this report, based on the versions of Miss Nilakshi, Mrs. Sebika Gogoi, Mr. Vipin Nanda, Mr. M.K.Dewan, Mr. Kamal and Mr. Prafulla Sharma is being made, at the behest of Continental Counsellor Mr. Praveen Mallik, who desires that a preliminary report on the incidents leading to interrogation of Baha'is by the security agencies should be made. It is repeated that while the ordeals, physical and mental harassments and spiritual tests faced by our dear friends cannot be entirely comprehended to be penned down, even the exact facts and sequence of events may not have been informed by me in its proper perspective, as my report is based on telephonic conversations with the friends as mentioned above.

I thank all the friends who supported and constantly accompanied the valiant soldiers of Baha'u'llah during their trying times and all others —the individuals and institutions who had been asking for divine assistance and will continue to do so, in future; for as it seems, the calamity for an afflicted humanity is far from over. This kind of incident reminds us that we can not escape the agonies and tribulations befalling on the generality of mankind, just because we are Baha'is, rather we have to remain prepared to take a lion share of such maladies.

With salutes to our fore bearing friends and with best wishes of welfare for Kenso Narzary,

Yours in His service,

S.K.Panigrahi
SECRETARY